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THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ISLAM IN ETHIOPIA¹

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‘Islam can be disposed of very quickly, partly... because... [of] the long conflict between Christianity and Islam... partly on account of its merely secondary importance to an understanding of the essential Abyssinia...’²

‘Islam in the region would have no history without [Christian] Abyssinia.’³

‘... it [Islam] constituted a mortal danger, an effective threat of utter annihilation of everything that stands for Ethiopia.’⁴

Thus a retired professor of Ethiopian studies at the University of London, a specialist in Islam in Africa, and a recent Italian writer have spoken of Islam in Ethiopia. Surprisingly enough, Trimingham, the author of the standard work on the subject, still maintained the same position when he wrote in 1969 that ‘Islam in the region is not significant

¹ An earlier version of this paper was read at the International Symposium on Ethnography and History in Ethiopian Studies held at Addis Ababa University, November 1982, and a shorter one at the second annual seminar of the Department of History, AAU, 1983. I wish to record my appreciation to the symposium participants for their stimulating response and encouragement. Subsequently, the late Dr R. A. Caulk (Rutgers University at Camden) read it in his characteristic meticulous and critical way as also did Dr Paulo Farias (CWAS, University of Birmingham). To both of them I should like to express my indebtedness. The present article is an abridged version of the first chapter of my doctoral dissertation: ‘Clerics, Traders and Chiefs: A Historical Study of Islam in Wallo (Ethiopia), with Special Emphasis on the Nineteenth Century’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1985), 1–79.

² E. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People* (London, 1960), 112–13; repeated verbatim in subsequent edns.: 2nd (1965) and 3rd (1973). See also his article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edn., Leiden/London, 1971), 5.

³ J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London, 1952), 143.

⁴ Carmelo Conte, *Ethiopia: An Introduction to the Ethnology of Law*, trans. Juliana Hill Cotton (Milan, 1979), 179.

in itself but only in relation to the history of the Christian state in northern Ethiopia...'⁵ This view is hardly justified. Not only has the literature on Islam in Ethiopia shown considerable growth since the first publication of his book, but also the substantial material which he himself used suggests a different interpretation. Such statements, however, are not unusual. They are part of a long-established historiographical prejudice which has been a common feature of most of the available works dealing with Islam in Ethiopia.

The main basis for the view expressed by Ullendorff and Trimingham regarding Islam in Ethiopia is the conventional distinction they and many other writers have often made between what they refer to as 'historic Abyssinia', which is Semitic and Christian, and Ethiopia, which, as a broad political and geographical unit made up of diverse peoples, emerged much later.⁶ However, in spite of the preponderance of Christianity as a state religion and the dominance of the Semitic-speaking group within a long narrow corridor stretching from the north to the central highlands, Abyssinia had historically been a heterogeneous society consisting of non-Semitic pagan and Muslim elements of equal historical standing. In particular the spread of Islam in the region can be dated to the middle of the eighth century AD, and by the tenth century a large number of Muslim communities had been established in the main trading centres of north and central Ethiopia. Besides, the territorial expansion of the Christian kingdom did not always necessarily imply the immediate expansion of the church and the acceptance of Christianity by the indigenous peoples, for this came about after a long and difficult process of evangelization.⁷ In fact the period of the definitive consolidation of Christianity in Abyssinia began in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,⁸ by which time Islam had also been well established in the Ethiopian region.

INTRODUCTION

Islam in Ethiopia has a long history, rich in both oral and written source material; it is no disposable adjunct but an integral part of any

⁵ In James Kritzeck and William H. Lewis (eds.), *Islam in Africa* (New York, 1969), 21.

⁶ Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, viii, 36; Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, v, 22-3. The matter is further compounded by both writers using Abyssinia and Ethiopia interchangeably.

⁷ Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527* (Oxford, 1972), 23-35.

⁸ Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 65; Tadesse, *Church and State*, 156, 158, 204 (map 5).

true history of Ethiopia. The existing historical record reflects a clear pattern of growth and development of an indigenous culture inspired by, and based on, Islam as a social and religious medium of identity for a significant part of the Ethiopian population.⁹ Like their Christian counterparts, Muslim communities have contributed variously towards the development of Ethiopian culture and society. As Cerulli shows, Islam and the Muslims have had a strong influence upon the country's history.¹⁰ The study of this contribution, and of Ethiopian Muslim culture, has nevertheless been neglected. This constitutes one of the major gaps in our knowledge about Ethiopian history.

Tadesse Tamrat's chapters in the *Cambridge History of Africa*¹¹ and the *Unesco General History of Africa*¹² constitute a fresh and even-handed treatment of the positive role of Islam in Ethiopia and the Horn, as his emphasis is not on the perennial conflicts and wars between Christian and Muslim states but on the more pacific aspects such as commerce and cultural interactions. What is lacking in the existing literature is the study of the internal development of Islam to the degree that, for instance, Tadesse has studied the expansion of Christianity in the light of internal church developments.¹³

The main purpose of this paper is threefold: to review critically part of the existing literature on some aspects of Ethiopian Islam; to identify the gaps in our knowledge of Islam in the Ethiopian region and call attention to geographical areas, themes, and types of source material that require investigation if the present imbalance is to be redressed; and to point out that, in the context of the general historiography of Islam in Africa, the subject deserves more attention than it has hitherto received. The survey of the literature will be confined to the published secondary material that has been available to this writer to date.

⁹ General estimates of the size of the Muslim population vary so much in the sources that it is difficult to propose even an approximate figure. A recent source suggests 45 per cent are Muslims and 40 per cent Christians: *Africa South of the Sahara* (London, 1990), 469.

¹⁰ Enrico Cerulli, 'L'Islam en Ethiopie: sa signification historique et ses méthodes', *Correspondance d'Orient* (Colloque sur la Sociologie Musulmane, 11–14 September 1961), 5 (1961), 323.

¹¹ Tadesse Tamrat, 'Ethiopia, the Red Sea and the Horn', in Roland Oliver (ed.), *Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1977), 105, 143–4.

¹² T. Tamrat, 'The Horn of Africa: the Solomonids in Ethiopia and the States of the Horn of Africa', in D. T. Niane (ed.), *Unesco General History of Africa*, vol. 4 (Paris/London/Berkeley, 1984), 423–54. See also his recent publications in which the theme of interaction and integration is discussed succinctly and thoroughly: 'Processes of Ethnic Interaction and Integration in Ethiopian History: the Case of the Agaw', *Journal of African History*, 29 (1988), 5–18 and 'Ethnic Interaction and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Gafat', *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 21 (1988), 121–54.

¹³ Tadesse, *Church and State*, 156–205.

The neglect of Islam in Ethiopian studies¹⁴ and the need for a thorough investigation into the dynamics of Islam in Ethiopia have already been noted by a new generation of writers.¹⁵ In spite of them, the di-hard notion that the history of Islam can be reduced to a chronicle of incessant, and inevitable, conflicts between the Christians of the highlands and the Muslims of the lowlands is still treated as received wisdom.¹⁶ The theme runs through most of the recent historiography in which Islam has been viewed as a perennial threat to the survival of the Ethiopian state and the Ethiopian national identity itself. Yet positive interactions between Muslim and Christian Ethiopians may well prove to have been of far greater importance than conflicts. Contrary to what many writers have stated, Islam cannot be seen as a historical force external to Ethiopia. During the long period extending from the fall of Aksum to the present day, Islam has been an integral part of Ethiopian culture.

It is misleading to explain the conflicts between the medieval Christian kingdom and the neighbouring Muslim sultanates as a contest between Christianity and Islam, or between highland cultivators and lowland pastoralists.¹⁷ Yet even modern authors writing in Arabic have been satisfied with this narrow interpretation.¹⁸ However, it has been clearly shown that deeper socio-economic undercurrents were at work behind the conflicts.¹⁹ Egyptian attempts at conquest in the 1870s and Ottoman/German intrigues in the time of Lej Iyyāsu (deposed 1916) have also been used to brand Islam as an external aggressive force. The significance of Islam as a cohesive rather than a divisive factor in Ethiopian society has been overlooked by all but a few recent authors.

The view that the fear and danger of Islam are virtually constitutive of Ethiopian national history has become so familiar that even casual readers of works on Ethiopian history cannot have failed to notice it. Selective use of the available sources and the application of inadequate models of interpretation seem to account for this situation.

The best-known study of the first decades of the nineteenth century is M. Abir's book, which developed from a London University thesis.

¹⁴ Cerulli, 'L'Islam en Ethiopie', 317.

¹⁵ For instance, D. Crummey in his review of Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes, The Challenge of Islam and the Reunification of the Christian Empire 1769–1855* (London, 1968) in *Journal of African History*, 11. 2 (1970), 23; id., 'Society, State and Nationality in the Recent Historiography of Ethiopia', *JAH* 31 (1990), 118.

¹⁶ As is clearly evident from the very subtitle of Abir's work (cited above) which reflects the traditional Islam-versus-Christianity model.

¹⁷ See below, nn. 20 and 81.

¹⁸ See below, nn. 165–72.

¹⁹ Taddesse, *Church and State*, 84–5, 297–302; Merid Wolde Aregay, 'Population Movement as a Possible Factor in the Christian-Muslim Conflict of Medieval Ethiopia', *Symposium Leo Frobenius* (Munich, Deutsche UNESCO Kommission, 1974), 266–81.

It remains, after a quarter of a century, the standard work on the period. However, the author explains the struggle amongst the warlords of northern and central Ethiopia during the *Zamana Masāfent* (c. 1750–1855) as a clash between Amhara-Tegrēan paladins of Christianity and Yajju Oromo champions of Islam.²⁰ Two issues need re-examination here: first, the precise role of ethnic solidarity in those power struggles²¹ and, second, how far it is viable to interpret nineteenth-century developments largely in religious terms. Factors other than loyalty to a particular faith may have been decisive in the conflicts and rivalries of the time.²²

In most studies of Ethiopian history,²³ the sections on Islam tend to flatten themselves into threadbare narratives of confrontation with Christianity which merely bridge the gaps between a few chronological milestones. They read like survivals of the old *histoire événementielle* genre. Overall patterns of Islamization are all but ignored, together with socio-economic trends. It is only to the artificial pattern of supposedly necessary conflict between Muslims and Christians that allegiance is paid.

The Muslims of Ethiopia have been consistently described at second hand, through the eyes of some other group — generally from the point of view of those who had political and ideological reasons to see them as foreign to Ethiopia itself. The older Christian writings, both local and foreign, identified Ethiopia with the Christian state and church; they saw Muslims as outsiders by definition. The medieval and early modern chronicles in Ethiopic and Amharic took that view, and as their contents were retransmitted orally, so was their bias. This bias was frequently hostile.

Except for brief periods, the feudal state maintained a hostile and belligerent attitude towards indigenous Muslims. In 1668, for example, in the reign of Yohannes I (1668–82), a religious council was held in the then imperial capital, Gondar, which called on the Muslims to reside in a separate quarter of the town. In the time of Tēwodros II (1855–68), a harsher policy was adopted: he ordered the Muslims to convert or face expulsion. In 1878, at the Council of Boru Mēdā, Yohannes IV (1872–89) decreed that Muslims, particularly those of Wallo, were to be baptized or suffer banishment. In the sources of the

²⁰ Abir, *Ethiopia: Era of the Princes*, xxiv, 43, 111–15, 183.

²¹ On the inadequacy of ethnicity as a factor in the struggles during the warlord era, see D. Crummey, 'Society and Ethnicity in the Politics of Christian Ethiopia during the *Zamana Masafent*', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 8.2 (1975), 266–78, especially 271 ff. and 275 ff.

²² Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London, 1976), 94–5.

²³ Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, 67, 71–6; Trimmingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 69–98.

period, and in the later secondary works based upon them, attention is paid only to the political circumstances which dictated those measures and to the degree of success in the enforcement of the respective decrees. The social and economic impact of such measures and their contribution to setting the Christians and Muslims apart are overlooked.

Custom has been equally important in identifying Muslims as foreigners. However, Muslims and Christians have shared for centuries many aspects of the overall Ethiopian culture, such as belonging to a common ethnic-linguistic group and to the same political system. In most areas they have lived side by side in the same localities. In addition, the two communities have been in quite regular contact through trade. But there has been little to encourage such contacts to develop into a mutual, enduring awareness of each other's importance or of the need for coexistence and reciprocal tolerance. Muslims and Christians have traditionally lacked mutual understanding of each other's way of life. Ethiopian Christians knew little about Islam and, encouraged by the state and clergy, entertained distorted ideas of what Muslims did and thought. Social stigmas were attached to the Muslims and to Islam. Occupations such as trade and weaving, with which Muslims have long been associated, were actually despised by the dominant ideology. The feudal lords and their retainers looked down upon trade and the Muslim clerisy, and so did most Christian commoners. It seems that it was precisely for that reason that such occupations fell into the hands of Muslims and the word *naggādē* (Amharic: merchant) came to acquire a religious (Muslim) connotation. Popular sayings reflect such negative attitudes. *Machaññā nakāsh* (Amharic: binders of hide-straps) is a typical derogatory term for traders. A common stereotype holds that Christians are provident while Muslims are sensualists; hence the Christian saying: 'For a Muslim, wealth is measured by the number of women he marries; for a Christian, by the amount of land he owns.' Such positive attributes as honesty, business acumen, and piety, which are sometimes referred to as characteristics of Muslims, have not been strong enough to overshadow the conventional association of greed and avarice with Muslims in general, and the proverbial impermanence of the religious allegiance of the Wallo Muslims in particular. Many of the stereotypes about Muslims are insulting, even obscene, and are very similar to those that were current in medieval Christian Europe.

As for the Muslims, they tended to regard all the Amhara as Christians, even though some Muslims belonged to that ethnic group. Muslims have traditionally disapproved of the Christian reverence for the *tābot* (Ark of the Covenant), which they regarded as incompatible with pure monotheism. Muslim attitudes have been consistently derived from sheer ignorance or imperfect knowledge of the Christian faith. Each of

the two communities has a taboo against eating the flesh of animals slaughtered by the other.²⁴ Yet it is not unusual for an ordinary Christian or ordinary Muslim to visit each other's shrines seeking health and material prosperity.

The outcome of such official and popular prejudices has been to strengthen the barrier between the Christian and Muslim communities. More specifically, they have led in modern times to concentration on the theme of confrontation, and to the neglect of the study of the history and culture of Ethiopian Muslims.

I. EARLY AND MEDIEVAL ARABIC SOURCES

The earliest sources for the history of Islam in Ethiopia are the writings of the classical Arab authors. Both travellers to East Africa and scholars who lived in the Arab heartland wrote on Islam in Ethiopia. The migration to Aksum of the early converts to Islam, following their persecution by the Qurayshite oligarchy in Makka, is first recorded in the works of the Prophet's biographers, Ibn Hishām (d. AH 218) and Ibn Ishāq (fl. AH 85–151).²⁵ Other Arab Muslim chroniclers also mention the episode. Among these are Ibn Kathīr and al-Ṭabarī.²⁶ However, Ibn Hishām's is the most detailed version. Several related and important episodes are found in it. All subsequent writers have based their accounts on these early Arabic works, although their interpretations have varied.²⁷

²⁴ For a recent study, see Ulrich Braukämper, 'On Food Avoidances in Southern Ethiopia: Religious Manifestation and Socio-Economic Relevance', in Sven Rubenson (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Lund, 26–29 April 1982* (Addis Ababa/Uppsala/East Lansing, 1984), 429–45.

²⁵ 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Hishām, *al-Sīratu 'l-Nabawiyya*, in Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, and 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ Shalbī (eds.) (Beirut, 1391/1971), i. 344–65, ii. 3–8; A. G. Guillaume (ed./trans.), *The Life of Muhammad (A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah)* (Karachi, 1967), 146–55, 167–9, 179.

²⁶ Ibn Kathīr al-Qurashī al-Dimashqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Uzmā* (Egypt, n.d.), ii. 85; Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'u'l-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (3rd edn., Beirut, 1398/1977), vii. 1–5. (I am grateful to the late al-Ḥāj Muḥammad Thānī, Imām of the Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa, for making the Arabic works cited above available to me for consultation.)

²⁷ M. Hartmann, 'Der Naḡaṣi Aṣḥama und sein Sohn Armā', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 49 (1895), 299–300; S. Q. Fatimi, 'A New Light on the Hijrat to Habashah', *Pakistan Historical Society Journal*, 9.1 (1961), 109–15; Safer Alam, 'The First Hijra: a Study in the Earliest Christian-Muslim Relations' (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1982). See also 'Abd al-Jabbār Maḥmūd al-Sāmīrā'ī, 'al-Rasā'il allati ba'atha bihā al-Nabiyyu Ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa sallam ilā Mulūk al-Duwal al-Mujāwara', *al-Fayṣal*, 55 (1981), 71–81.

Recent oral informants,²⁸ as well as the early and later Arabic sources, state that there were two *hijras* to Ethiopia. However, writers such as Trimingham, basing themselves on the standard European orientalist view, recognize only a single *hijra*.²⁹ But this conclusion overlooks the time factor and the reasons which prompted the migration. The *hijra* is regarded by all writers as a significant landmark in the history of Islam in the region, though no sustained effort at proselytization by the immigrants has been recorded. Oral informants say that there was no possibility of preaching the new religion as the refugees were not yet secure in their place of asylum, and because there was clerical opposition to their stay.

Of all the episodes associated with the *hijra*, the most controversial are the claim made by Arab writers that the king of Aksum had converted to Islam, and his alleged exchange of letters with the Prophet. Here, too, there is a clear split among writers. Muslim scholars, both Arab and Ethiopian, believe that Ashama, the Aksumite king, did convert, and that the letters quoted by early and later writers are genuine. On the other hand, non-Muslim scholars have tended to regard the letters as legendary³⁰ and the king's conversion as a fiction.³¹ Those episodes are not recorded by Ethiopian Christian sources, a fact which has strengthened the scepticism of non-Muslim writers. But there are no Christian chronicles of that period, and modern Ethiopian and foreign historians refer to the Arabic sources while mentioning the *hijra* itself. Non-Muslim writers seem to dismiss out of hand the very possibility of the king's secret conversion claimed by Ibn Hishām, whose account also mentions clerical opposition and civil war ending in a Christian restoration.³² Yet in itself none of this is intrinsically improbable; the matter demands re-examination from the point of view of the historian, not the hagiographer.

A second category of Arabic sources for the early and medieval periods comprises the largely geographical accounts of al-Ya'qūbī (d.

²⁸ Shaykh al-Ḥāj Muḥammad Tāj al-Dīn Aḥmad (interviewed in Kombolchā, 29 March and 4 April 1982) and Shaykh Muẓaffar Baḥru (interviewed on 30 March 1982) and others, to all of whom I am grateful for their collaboration during my fieldwork.

²⁹ Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 44, n. 2.

³⁰ A Guérinot, 'L'Islam et l'Abyssinie', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 34 (1917–18), 1–67, especially 8; Sergew Hable Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Ababa, 1972), 17. For a recent writer's claim that one of the originals of the letter asking the Ethiopian king to embrace Islam was discovered (we are not told where and when), see Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh, 'African (Black) Muslims in the Time of the Prophet', *al-'Ilm*, 4 (1984), 17.

³¹ Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 46, n. 4; Sergew, *Ethiopian History to 1270*, 185; J. Dorese, *L'Empire du Prêtre-Jean* (Paris, 1957), ii. 4.

³² Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 154–5.

AD 897), Ibn Ḥawqal (fl. second half of the tenth century), al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956), al-Idrīsī (d. 1165), al-'Umarī (1301–49), Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1304–69), Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406), Qalqashandī (1355–1418), and al-Maqrīzī (fourteenth century). They provide information on the northern and eastern coasts of the Ethiopian region.³³ Since none of them travelled to the east coast of Africa (except Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, though he did not visit Ethiopia itself), and since each tended largely to repeat what his predecessor had said, their topographic and ethnographic information lacks the precision and reliability of eyewitness accounts. Moreover, most of their data deal only with the coastal areas, and thus have limited value as far as developments taking place in the Muslim interior are concerned. However, some of their material has been used by those reconstructing the medieval history of the Christian kingdom.³⁴ It would be useful to collate and edit all the early and medieval Arabic texts relevant to Ethiopia, and also to translate them, as has been done for West Africa.³⁵

For the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we are fortunate in having two documents composed by Yemeni writers who were eyewitnesses to the events they described. One of these accounts is about the conquest of northern and central Ethiopia by Imām Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm (1506–43), popularly known as Grāñ. It was written by Shihāb al-Dīn, who recorded the imām's campaigns until 1535.³⁶ The other is a first-hand account by al-Ḥaymī, who led a Yemeni delegation in 1647 to the court of Fāsīladas (r. 1632–67).³⁷

³³ For a short summary, see *EL*, vol. 1 (1960), 6–7. Also the sections on Ethiopia in L. Y. Kubbel and V. V. Matveev (eds./trans.), *Arab. Istochniki I: Arabskie Istochniki VII-X vekov po Ethnographii i Istori Afriki yuzhnee Sakhary* (Moscow/Leningrad, 1960) and *Arab. Istochniki II: Arabski Istochniki X-XII vekov...* (1965) and Tadeusz Lewicki, *Arabic External Sources for the History of Africa to the South of Sahara* (2nd impression, London, 1974), *passim*.

³⁴ Sergew, *Ethiopian History to 1270*, 17, 181–92; Tadesse, *Church and State*, 122 ff., 307–8 (bibliography).

³⁵ Joseph M. Cuq (ed./trans.), *Recueil des sources arabes concernant l'Afrique occidentale du VIIIe au XVIe siècle (Bilād al-Sūdān)* (Paris, 1975), and J. F. P. Hopkins (trans.), N. Levtzion and J. F. P. Hopkins (eds.), *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (Cambridge, 1981).

³⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Qādir b. Sālim b. 'Uthmān ('Arab Faqīh), *Futūḥ al-Ḥabasha*, ed./trans. by René Basset under the title, *Histoire de la conquête d'Abyssinie* (Paris, 1897–1901). There are less authoritative Italian, German, and, recently, Arabic editions of the chronicle. The present writer came across an early manuscript version by an anonymous scribe dated 1064/1653 entitled *Kitāb al-Futūḥ al-Ḥabasha al-Musammā Bahjatu 'l-Zamān*.

³⁷ Al-Ḥaymī al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad, *Sīratu 'l-Ḥabasha*, ed. Murād Kāmil (Cairo, 1958). For an early commentary, see F. Praetorius, 'Ein arabisches Document zur äthiopischen Geschichte', *ZDMG* 39 (1885), 403–10, and for a later complete German edition, F. E. Peiser, *Zur Geschichte Abessinians im 17 Jahrhundert: Der Gesandtschaftsbericht des*

Shihāb al-Dīn's account must be read in conjunction with the medieval chronicles of the Christian kingdom. Nevertheless, it reveals the magnitude of the military conflict between Christian and Muslim forces and touches upon some deeper issues. Just as significantly, his *Futūḥ al-Ḥabasha* provides a limited but important description of the impact of the conquest upon both Christian and Muslim populations. It also provides clues to the pattern of Islamization among the populations living in the central parts of present-day Ethiopia during the 1530s. Even today oral traditions speak of a number of settlements in parts of Wallo named after some of the 'ulamā' who accompanied Grāñ during his campaigns. These settlements later became centres for the propagation of Islam in the surrounding areas.³⁸ It is interesting to note in this connection that some informants claimed that the second part of Shihāb al-Dīn's work is extant and that they have seen it, though they were unable to say where it is now kept.³⁹

The study of the sixteenth-century military conquest of large areas of Ethiopia by the Muslims under Grāñ has given rise to conflicting interpretations of his origin and of the nature and impact of the conquest itself.⁴⁰ Davis has claimed that Grāñ's was a Somali movement,⁴¹ while Martin has seen it as the outcome of an Arab empire-building enterprise.⁴² Davis asserts that the imām's forces were swollen by Somali clans domiciled in the central and northern highlands and that his title suggests Shī'ite influence.⁴³ Another scholar has put forward hypotheses

Hasan ben Ahmed El Haimi (Berlin, 1898). Dr E. van Donzel has recently produced an English translation: *A Yemenite Embassy to Ethiopia 1647-1649* (Äthiopistische Forschungen Band 21) (Stuttgart, 1986). See my review in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* [hereafter *JES*], 19 (1986), 143-5.

³⁸ Informants cited above, n. 28. See also Domenico Brielli, 'Ricordi storici dei Uollo', *Studi Ethiopici* (Raccolti da C. Conti Rossini) (1945), 86.

³⁹ Shaykh Muḥammad Walē b. Aḥmad (interviewed in Addis Ababa, 25 June 1982) and Shaykh Muḥammad Jāmmā (Dasē, 4 May 1982).

⁴⁰ For a view favouring a Somali origin for the imām, see Mahmud Brelvi, *Islam in Africa* (Lahore, 1964), 200; Robert L. Hess, "'The Mad Mullah" and Northern Somalia', *JAH* 5.3 (1964), 415; J. A. Falana, 'Ahmed Gran's Invasion of Ethiopia in the 16th Century and the Aftermath of the Invasion', *The African Historian* (Journal of the Historical Society of the University of Ife, Ibadan), 2.1 (1966), 43-6; Margaret Castagno, *Historical Dictionary of Somalia* (African Historical Dictionaries, No. 6) (Metuchen, N.J., 1975), 7-8; and Said S. Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1982), 182.

⁴¹ Asa J. Davis, 'The Sixteenth Century Jihad in Ethiopia and the Impact on its Culture' (Part One), *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 2.4 (1963), 568, 581, 588.

⁴² B. G. Martin, 'Arab Migrations to East Africa in Medieval Times', *IJAHS* 7.3 (1975), 375-6. See also Théophile Obenga, 'Documents imprimés arabes, sources de l'histoire africaine', *Afrika Zamani*, 4 (1975), 45.

⁴³ Davis, 'The Sixteenth Century Jihad', 577 and in Part Two, *JHSN* 3.1 (1964), 117-20.

about the presence of Zaydī elements among the followers of the imām, and about ideological factors behind the conquest.⁴⁴ No such suggestions can be firmly substantiated beyond serious doubt in the light of either the contemporary documents or later written sources and oral traditions, but this major episode in Ethiopian history remains of great importance for Islam.

Al-Ḥaymī's mission, although unsuccessful, has left us an account of the journey of its leader from the coast to the imperial court in Gondar. On the basis of al-Ḥaymī's information Muslim writers have claimed that Fāsiladas had converted to Islam.⁴⁵ Van Donzel has recently challenged this, although he concedes that the evidence shows that the king was favourably disposed towards Islam.⁴⁶

II. EUROPEAN TRAVEL AND SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

European travellers and missionaries from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century have incorporated in their accounts some useful material which, however, needs to be used cautiously and critically for the partial reconstruction of the history of Islam in the region. Perhaps the earliest observer was the Portuguese chaplain, Francisco Alvares, who has left us a brief account of a lively Muslim trading community in south-eastern Tegrāy and of frequent interaction between the Christians and Muslims.⁴⁷ He also provided a short description of the sultanate of Adāl and its conflicts with the Christian kingdom in the early part of the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ In the seventeenth century the Jesuit missionary Manoel de Almeida remarked on the presence of Muslims throughout the Ethiopian region and gave what is perhaps the earliest estimate of the relative size of the Muslim population: a third of the country's total. He also underlined their important role in trade. Like Alvares before him, he was impressed by the degree of interaction between

⁴⁴ Robert Ferry, 'Quelques hypothèses sur les origines des conquêtes musulmanes en Abyssinie au XVI^e siècle', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 2 (1961), 32–3, 35.

⁴⁵ See below, nn. 165 ff.

⁴⁶ E. van Donzel, 'Fasiladas et l'Islam', in Joseph Tubiana (ed.), *Modern Ethiopia from the Accession of Menilek II to the Present: Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Nice, 19–22 December 1977* (Rotterdam, 1980), 391. See also his *Foreign Relations of Ethiopia 1642–1700, Documents Relating to the Journeys of Khodja Murād* (Leiden/Istanbul, 1979), 4–12.

⁴⁷ Francisco Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1961), i. 187, 251.

⁴⁸ Ibid. ii. 407–15.

Muslims and Christians.⁴⁹ The German scholar Ludolf, basing himself on the account of the Ethiopian Abbā Gregorius, wrote that '... the Mahumetans are ... intermix'd up and down the Country with the Christians, employing themselves altogether in Tillage or Merchandizing; Trade being all in their hands...'⁵⁰

The French physician who came to Gondar at the close of the seventeenth century reported that the Muslims lived in a special quarter of the town and that, in spite of the fact that they were tolerated, they were held in low esteem by the Christian population.⁵¹ By contrast he observed that at Enfrāz, south of Gondar, Muslims were able to practise their faith freely and that there was no residential segregation.⁵² He noted that in Duvarna (Debārṡā) Muslims lived in the lower section of the town, as in Gondar.⁵³ Seventy years later the Scottish traveller Bruce visited Gondar and in his account mentioned one Naggādrās (chief of customs) Muḥammad, of whom he said that he was 'chief of the Moors at Gondar and principal merchant in Abyssinia'. He also wrote about a 'Moorish town' consisting of 3000 houses (reduced later in his account to 1000).⁵⁴ The most interesting part of his very brief report on the Muslims of Gondar is that they used to provide quasi-military services to the monarch and nobility as they were in charge of luggage and the transport of war materials. Bruce noted that they formed a special corps under (Muslim) officers. However, he added, they 'never suffered, nor do they chuse, to fight on either side'.⁵⁵ He also mentioned Enfrāz⁵⁶ but without noting it as a Muslim town.

In the nineteenth century various English and French travellers included in their accounts some interesting observations on the importance of Islam in north-central Ethiopia. Henry Salt was struck by the similarities in language and cultural traits between the Muslim Oromo and Christian Amhara in Wallo.⁵⁷ Combes and Tamisier in the 1830s spoke of the predominance of the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī *madhhabs* among the Muslims of the same region, as well as the importance of scholar-saints in chiefly courts and the characteristics of popular Islam. They

⁴⁹ C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford (trans./eds.), *Some Records of Ethiopia 1593–1646* (London, 1954), 55.

⁵⁰ Job Ludolphus, *A New History of Ethiopia*, ed. J. P. Gent (London, 1684), 73–4, 397.

⁵¹ [Charles] Poncet, *A Voyage to Ethiopia Made in the Years 1698, 1699, and 1700*, English trans. (London, 1709), 61.

⁵² Ibid. 82–3.

⁵³ Ibid. 102.

⁵⁴ James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773*, 5 vols. (Edinburgh, 1790), iii. 198.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 381.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 386.

⁵⁷ Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia, and Travels into the Interior of that Country* (London, 1814), 300.

made the intriguing remark that the 'Wallo do not possess mosques'.⁵⁸ Isenberg and Krapf provide rich material on the political geography of central Ethiopia, especially of Wallo. They wrote on popular Islam in the region and Krapf described the Wallo Muslims as 'bigoted and fanatic Mahomedans' - a remark reflecting the personal predicament which had befallen him during his travels. There is also some information on the political conditions prevailing in the late 1830s and early 1840s.⁵⁹ Elsewhere Krapf makes reference to a tradition which credits an Arab called 'Debelo' with introducing Islam to Wallo.⁶⁰ Lefebvre's account has useful data on trade and trade-routes in northern and central Ethiopia and some information on Muslim lords in Wallo.⁶¹ In the account written by one of the d'Abbadie brothers, there is frequent mention of the strength of Islam in the northern and central regions of Ethiopia. He mentioned Salāmgē, the Muslim quarter in Gondar, and discussed the role of the Muslim inhabitants, the function of the *nag-gādrās*, and the importance of religious notables as leaders of the community.⁶² He also described the political units constituting the regions. The material he collected on Islam in Wallo is considerable, and his reference to Harar as the centre from where Islam was brought to Wallo, although not entirely true, finds an echo in present-day oral traditions.⁶³ Paulitschke, the Austrian traveller and scholar who visited Harar in 1884-5, included in his account some interesting information on that city during the nineteenth century.⁶⁴

In spite of religious biases and factual errors, especially in the accounts

⁵⁸ E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie, dans le pays des Gallas, de Choa et d'Ifat*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1838), ii. 300-1. See also [P. V.] Ferret and [J. G.] Gallinier, *Voyage en Abyssinie, dans les provinces du Tigré, du Samen et de l'Amhara*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1847), ii. 328-9. On Ifāt and Shawā, see C. E. X. Rochet d'Héricourt, *Voyage sur la côte orientale de la mer rouge, dans le pays d'Adel et le royaume de Choa* (Paris, 1846).

⁵⁹ C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf, *The Journals of C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf* (new edn, London, 1968), 322-428.

⁶⁰ J. Lewis Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (London, 1860), 83. The tradition is not substantiated by any other written or oral evidence.

⁶¹ Théophile Lefebvre, *Voyage en Abyssinie exécuté pendant les années 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1845-54), ii. 107 ff.

⁶² Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie (Abyssinie)*, ed. Jeanne-Marie Allier (Studi e Testi, 286) (Vatican, 1980), i. 162-4, ii. 63. Arnauld mentions one Shaykh 'Alī who was head of the 'ulamā' of Gondar. This is corroborated by oral traditions.

⁶³ *Ibid.* ii. 200. Actually, the connection with Harar concerns only the introduction of the Qādiriyya order, not Islam *per se*, as Arnauld reports.

⁶⁴ Philipp Paulitschke, *Harar* (Leipzig, 1888); see also his 'Le Harar sous l'administration égyptienne 1875-1885', *Bulletin de la Société Khédiviale de Géographie*, série 2, no. 10 (1887), 575-91.

of later writers,⁶⁵ the European travellers and missionaries recorded details not available in other contemporary sources.

III. PRINCIPAL TWENTIETH-CENTURY WORKS

Early in this century Arnold discussed the history of Islam in Ethiopia based on Arabic sources and European accounts.⁶⁶ Modern regional studies were inaugurated by the late Italian scholar Enrico Cerulli in the 1920s. His numerous publications on the subject have been a source of inspiration for specialists in Ethiopian history and culture. One of his earliest works includes a short account of Ḥasan Injāmo of Qab-bēnnā (*fl.* late nineteenth century).⁶⁷ Cerulli also compiled a series of local histories in Arabic which he edited and translated. One of them is the history of the last years of the 'Sultanate of Shawā', which deals with events predating the earliest Christian chronicle.⁶⁸ He also edited fragments of narratives about Ifāt, Awsā, and Harar,⁶⁹ and Hararī Arabic materials.⁷⁰ His chapter on the spread of Islam in south-west Ethiopia⁷¹ and his *La lingua e la storia di Harar*, together with his translation and edition of the religious manual called *Kitāb al Farā'id*, have brought together a great deal of useful material on the history and language of Harar,⁷² although he does not discuss Harar's links with the rest of Muslim Ethiopia, except those with the coast.

Cerulli also wrote *L'Islam nell'Africa orientale*, which comprises several sections dealing with zones of Islamic expansion in the Horn and another section about Shaykh Ḥusayn, a Muslim mystic (*fl.* late

⁶⁵ Among the early twentieth-century ones, see Karl Cederquist, 'Islam and Christianity in Abyssinia', *The Moslem World*, 2 (1912), 152–6, who asserts that Grāñ introduced Islam to Ethiopia; Jonas Iwarson, 'Islam in Eritrea and Abyssinia', *MW* 18 (1928), 356–61; S. M. Zwemer, 'Islam in Ethiopia and Eritrea', *MW* 26.1 (1936), 5–15, who makes the absolutely unfounded statement that the religious orders do not exist in Ethiopia.

⁶⁶ T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (2nd edn., London, 1913), 113–21.

⁶⁷ 'The Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia', *Varia Africana*, 3 (Cambridge, Mass., 1922). See also his 'Pubblicazioni recenti dei Musulmani e dei Cristiani dell'Etiopia', *Oriente Moderno*, 8.9 (1928), 429–32.

⁶⁸ 'Il Sultanato dello Scioa nel secolo XIII secondo un nuovo documento storico', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 1.1 (1941), 5–42.

⁶⁹ *Documenti arabi per la storia dell'Etiopia*, *Memorie della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche (Roma, 1931).

⁷⁰ 'La fine dell'emirato di Harar in nuovi documenti storici', *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, n.s. 14.1 (1964), 75–82.

⁷¹ 'La diffusione dell'Islam nell sud-ovest etiopico', in E. Cerulli, *Etiopia occidentale* (Roma, 1933), 189–93.

⁷² Roma, 1936.

twelfth century).⁷³ In 1942 Cerulli published an article on the history of Harar from the sixteenth century up to the Egyptian conquest,⁷⁴ and a year later another article on medieval Ethiopia.⁷⁵ In an article in the early 1960s he criticized the neglect of Islam in Ethiopia by most scholars and he discussed the historical origins of the image of Islam as the 'traditional enemy', Islam's role as a 'resistance force against the Christian kingdom', and the stages and mechanisms of Islam's diffusion in south and south-west Ethiopia.⁷⁶ He contributed the chapter on East Africa to the comprehensive study *Religion in the Middle East*, in which he discussed the Muslim brotherhoods and the methods by which Islam was propagated.⁷⁷ His most recent work deals with the history of Islam in Ethiopia in relation to that of the Christian kingdom during the medieval period.⁷⁸

J. Spencer Trimingham has made particularly good use of a combination of Arabic, Ethiopic, and European sources in his *Islam in Ethiopia*, first published in 1952. In it he discusses the introduction and consolidation of Islam in Ethiopia and the Horn and is the first scholar to have treated the subject within a wider geographical context. However, he concentrates much of his attention upon the protracted struggles between the medieval Christian kingdom and the Muslim sultanates.⁷⁹ He includes very little discussion of the expansion of Islam into the central parts of Ethiopia. The book is partly an ethnographic study. Trimingham's assertion that the Jabarti, the Ethiopian Muslims of the highlands, constitute an Islamic diaspora⁸⁰ is a serious misrepresenta-

⁷³ Roma, 1941.

⁷⁴ 'Gli emiri di Harar dal secolo XVI alla conquista egiziana (1875)', *RSE* 2.1 (1942), 3–20. See also R. Basset, 'Chronologie des rois de Harar 1627–1887', *Journal Asiatique* (1914), 245–88, and K. Wendt, 'Amharische Geschichte eines Emirs von Harar im XVI Jahrhundert', *Orientalia*, 4 (1935), 484–501.

⁷⁵ 'L'Etioopia medievale in alcuni brani di scrittori arabi', *RSE* 3.3 (1943), 272–94.

⁷⁶ 'L'Islam en Ethiopie', *Correspondance d'Orient*, 5 (1961), 317–29. Cerulli's hypothesis that Islam was an ideology of resistance against the expansion of the Christian kingdom remains to be proved. For a similar view, see Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 103 and Davis, 'The Sixteenth Century Jihad' (Part One), 586.

⁷⁷ A. J. Arberry (ed.) (Cambridge, 1969), 203–19.

⁷⁸ 'L'Islam etiopico' in Enrico Cerulli, *L'Islam di ieri e di oggi* (Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto per l'Oriente, 64) (Roma, 1971), 113–36. Most of Cerulli's works on Islam are brought together in this single volume. (I am grateful to Dr A. Triulzi who kindly procured a copy of this work for me.) See also Cerulli's chapter 'Ethiopia's Relations with the Muslim World' in M. El-Fasi and I. Hrbek (eds.), *Unesco General History of Africa*, vol. 3 (Paris/Berkeley/London, 1988), 575–85.

⁷⁹ Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 32–146. Professor Ullendorff, in his review of Trimingham's book, in *Africa*, 18 (1953), 75–7, thinks that this section is 'the *pièce de résistance* of the study' and the author is commended for having 'consistently viewed Islam in Ethiopia in its due perspective [since] he has always drawn it against the solid background of monophysite Christianity'.

⁸⁰ Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 30, 151.

tion. It treats the indigenous converts in the northern and central regions of the country as if they had all originated from a common centre of dispersal and settled as immigrants who brought Islam with them.

M. Abir's valuable book, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes*, discusses in some detail the important role which Ethiopian Muslims played in the caravan trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁸¹ Although it overemphasizes the role of ethnic and religious differences in the power politics of the time, it throws considerable light on the history of the Muslim commercial settlements in the hinterland and on the Red Sea coast, the rise and development of the Oromo kingdoms in south-west Ethiopia, and the political history of the north and central regions during the nineteenth century.⁸² In a later work on the medieval history of Ethiopia, Abir pays greater attention to the existence and economic importance of the Muslim communities in the Ethiopian highlands and their contribution to the expansion and consolidation of the medieval Ethiopian state, including their role in administration and foreign missions.⁸³ At the same time, however, he seems to overemphasize the 'eastern Muslim menace' which the Christian kings had to reckon with.⁸⁴ He attributes a major role in the expansion of Islam to a large influx of Arab 'ulamā',⁸⁵ a view which conflicts with the available oral traditions and written sources, which throw light on the importance of indigenous scholars in the propagation of Islam.⁸⁶

A book by the French scholar Father Joseph Cuoq⁸⁷ surveys the history of Islam in the region from the seventh to the sixteenth century *vis-à-vis* the Christian kingdom and makes ample use of Arabic material to throw light on coastal Islam and Ifāt. It also treats the medieval conflicts in some detail. However, like his predecessors, Father Cuoq dwells much on the theme of Christian-Muslim antagonism, with Islam being depicted as the perennial threat to the Christian polity.⁸⁸

G. Hasselblatt has produced a number of articles and a short book

⁸¹ Abir, *Ethiopia: Era of the Princes*, 44–72.

⁸² Ibid. 1–26, 73–94, 95–137, 144–82.

⁸³ Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia and the Red Sea, the Rise and Decline of the Solomonic Dynasty and Muslim-European Rivalry in the Region* (London, 1980), 32, 84.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 173.

⁸⁵ Ibid. xvi. See also Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 139, who maintained a contrary view in his earlier work, *Islam in the Sudan* (London, 1949), 100.

⁸⁶ Informants: Shaykh al-Ḥāj Muḥammad Tāj-al-Dīn, al-Ḥaj Muḥammad Walē; and al-Ḥaj Muḥammad Thānī Ḥabīb (interviewed in Addis Ababa, 22 August 1983).

⁸⁷ Joseph Cuoq, *L'Islam en Ethiopie des origines au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1981). See also the section on Ethiopia in his earlier work, *Les Musulmans en Afrique* (Paris, 1975), 358–95.

⁸⁸ For a brief assessment of Cuoq's *L'Islam en Ethiopie*, see the present writer's review in the *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 30.2 (1985), 353–8.

on contemporary Islam in Ethiopia.⁸⁹ The articles, written as reports or circular letters by a missionary in the field, reflect personal impressions. Although the author mentions in passing certain important facts about Islam in Ethiopia, his studies are based on casual observations, and his assertion that contemporary Islam in the region is superficial is in need of substantiation.⁹⁰

One of the latest articles by Dombrowski is concerned with the mode of expansion of Islam in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.⁹¹ The author and his German colleagues, such as Wagner, Braukämper, and Plazikowsky-Brauner, represent the nucleus of a dwindling group of contemporary European orientalist who still maintain some interest in Ethiopia and its neighbours.⁹²

IV. BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL DICTIONARIES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Ethiopian Islam is not well represented either in the biographical and historical dictionaries or in the bibliographical works on Ethiopia and on Islam in Africa. *The Dictionary of Ethiopian Biography* has eighty-two specifically relevant entries, mostly on the first Muslim immigrants to Aksum and on sultans and emirs belonging to the ruling dynasties of various principalities such as Ifāt, Dahlak, and Harar.⁹³ Another biographical work has about a dozen entries related to Islam and two dozen titles of works in its bibliography.⁹⁴ One general historical biography lists only one entry (on Grāñ) out of a total of thirty on Ethiopia.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ G. Hasselblatt, 'Islam in Etiopien', *Svensk Missionstidskrift*, 59. 4 (1971); 'Islam in Ethiopia', *al-Basheer*, 1.3 (1972), 17–25; *Islam i Ethiopisk Kloederagt* (Christianfeld, 1973); 'Der Islam in Äthiopien', *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* (1973); and 'Visit to a Qadiriyya Mawlid Celebration in Ethiopia', *al-Basheer*, 3.2 (1974), 51–60.

⁹⁰ G. Hasselblatt, 'The Wollo Settlement Plan', *al-Basheer*, 2.3 (1973), 143–54. Here he speaks of 'sterilized, insignificant traditions of the religious phenomena' (144) and superficial Islam (146) in order to justify the establishment and activities - and failure - of missionary settlements in the region in the mid-1960s.

⁹¹ Franz Amdeus Dombrowski, 'The Growth and Consolidation of Muslim Power in the Horn of Africa: Some Observations', *Archiv Orientalní*, 51 (1983), 55–67.

⁹² Herma Plazikowsky-Brauner, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte des Islam in Abessinien', *Der Islam*, 32 (1957), 310–23.

⁹³ Belaynesh Michael, S. Chojnacki, and Richard Pankhurst (eds.), *The Dictionary of Ethiopian Biography*, I, *From Early Times to the End of the Zagwé Dynasty c. 1270 A.D.* (Addis Ababa, 1975).

⁹⁴ Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (African Historical Dictionaries, 32) (Metuchen, N.J., 1981), 2 ff., 394–5.

⁹⁵ Mark P. Lipschutz and R. Kent Rasmussen, *Dictionary of African Historical Biography* (London, 1978).

Harold Marcus's annotated bibliography of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century materials includes scattered references to a substantial number of travellers' reports and scholarly articles which, if brought together under one heading, would be of considerable help to those studying Ethiopian Islam.⁹⁶

Among recent bibliographies on Ethiopia, Brown's has about forty titles of books and articles on Islam,⁹⁷ while Alula and Dessalegn list no more than a dozen familiar titles on the subject.⁹⁸ In Ofori's African bibliography, Ethiopian Islam is represented by a mere seventeen titles.⁹⁹ By contrast, Zoghby's bibliography is probably the most complete as far as Islam in Ethiopia is concerned. While being especially valuable as regards recent Arabic material, altogether it lists about seventy titles of works in various languages from early times to 1977.¹⁰⁰ The first instalment of the *Encyclopaedia Africana* has a total of 155 biographical entries on Ethiopia, of which only eleven are associated with Islam.¹⁰¹

V. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PAPERS

The first and second International Conferences of Ethiopian Studies (Rome, 1959; Manchester, 1963) saw no contribution specifically devoted to Muslim studies. Out of eighty papers presented at the third, which met in Addis Ababa in 1966, only three were concerned with Islam: the first two with the epigraphy and archaeology of the Dahlak islands, and the third with a Somali saint.¹⁰² At the fourth congress (Rome, 1972), only three contributions had the history and the literature

⁹⁶ Harold G. Marcus, *The Modern History of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: A Select and Annotated Bibliography* (Hoover Institution Bibliographical Series: 56) (Stanford, 1972), *passim*.

⁹⁷ Clifton F. Brown, *Ethiopian Perspectives: A Bibliographical Guide to the History of Ethiopia* (Westport, Conn., and London, 1978).

⁹⁸ Alula Hidaru and Dessalegn Rahmato, *A Short Guide to the Study of Ethiopia: A General Bibliography* (Westport, Conn., 1976).

⁹⁹ Patrick E. Ofori, *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara: A Select Bibliographic Guide* (Nendeln, 1977).

¹⁰⁰ Samir M. Zoghby, *Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Partially Annotated Guide* (Washington, DC, 1978).

¹⁰¹ *The Encyclopaedia Africana Dictionary of African Biography, Ethiopia-Ghana* (New York, 1977).

¹⁰² *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa (3-7 April 1966)*, 3 vols. (Addis Ababa, 1969-70), i: Giuseppe Puglisi, 'Alcuni vestigi dell'isola di Dahlac Chebir e la leggenda dei Furs', 35-47; Salvatore Tedeschi, 'Note sulle isole Dahlak', 49-74; (see also his 'Il capostipite della dinastia dei sultani di Dahlak', *Africa*, 28.1 (1973), 65-72); and I. M. Lewis, 'Sharif Yesuf Barkhadle: The Blessed Saint of Somaliland', 75-81.

of Ethiopian Muslims as their focus.¹⁰³ Three papers, on Mahdism, Somalia, and the Argobbā, were read at the first United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies convened by Michigan State University (East Lansing, 1973).¹⁰⁴ Dr Martin's contribution on Mahdism,¹⁰⁵ together with his already mentioned article, also published in 1975,¹⁰⁶ provides a valuable basis for a systematic discussion of the medieval conflicts between the Muslim sultanates and the Christian kingdom in the context of other similar developments. But his suggestion that the wars permanently divided the highland Christians from the lowland Muslims along cultural and religious lines is untenable.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the weight he attributes to external factors in those conflicts may well be exaggerated. The last of the conference papers was a pioneer study by an energetic German geographer (d. 1975) on the Argobbā.¹⁰⁸ This and the same scholar's other study of central Ethiopia¹⁰⁹ constitute an important body of fresh data and views on the ethnography and history of the region.

At the first session of the Fifth International Conference (Nice, 1977), there was only one paper directly relevant to Islam. It dealt with the policy of Fāsiladas towards the neighbouring imāmate of Yemen.¹¹⁰ Two other papers relevant to Muslim studies appear in the proceedings¹¹¹ of the second session, which was held in Chicago in 1978. The one is a socio-cultural study of Harar,¹¹² and the other a study of trade and Christian-Muslim relations by Abir.¹¹³ The latter makes the rather hasty statement that the Horn produced no centres of Islamic learning.¹¹⁴ Yet the papers read at the Rome congress, and also the present writer's fieldwork amongst learned Muslims in Wallo and northern Shawā,

¹⁰³ *IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici (Roma, 10-15 aprile 1972)*, 2 vols. (Roma, 1974), i (Sezione storica): Rudi Paret, 'Eine fragwürdige arabische Chronik von Harar', 421-43; Robert Brunschvig, 'L'Islam enseigné par Ḥāmid b. Šiddīq de Harar (XVIIIe siècle)', 445-54; B. J. Andrzejewski, 'Sheikh Ḥussēn of Bāli in Galla Oral Traditions', 463-80.

¹⁰⁴ Harold Marcus (ed.), *Proceedings of the First United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies, Michigan State University, 2-5 May 1973* (East Lansing, 1975).

¹⁰⁵ B. G. Martin, 'Mahdism, Muslim Clerics, and Holy Wars in Ethiopia, 1300-1600', 91-100.

¹⁰⁶ See above, n. 42.

¹⁰⁷ Martin, 'Mahdism', 98.

¹⁰⁸ Volker Stitz, 'The Western Argobba of Yifat, Central Ethiopia', 185-92.

¹⁰⁹ Id., *Studien zur Kulturgeographie Zentraläthiopiens* (Bonn, 1974).

¹¹⁰ Van Donzel, 'Fāsiladas et l'Islam'.

¹¹¹ Robert L. Hess (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies, Session B. April 13-16, 1978* (Chicago, 1979).

¹¹² Sidney R. Waldron, 'Harar: The Muslim City in Ethiopia', 239-57.

¹¹³ Mordechai Abir, 'Trade and Christian-Muslim Relations in Post-Medieval Ethiopia', 411-14.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 412.

clearly show the vitality and long tradition of indigenous Muslim scholarship.

At the first USSR Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Moscow, 1979), a participant called attention to an Azerbaijani's visit to Ethiopia early in the last century, and to his collection of material on Ethiopian Muslims. The account of his journey was included in his biography written in Persian, and was discovered by Konyakov in the middle of the same century.¹¹⁵ At the Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Tel-Aviv, 1980), van Donzel read a paper on the correspondence between Fāsīladas and the imāms of Yemen.¹¹⁶ No paper specifically concerned with Islam in Ethiopia was presented at the Seventh International Conference (Lund, 1982).¹¹⁷ A paper on Muslim traders in Gondar was read at a symposium in Illinois, USA.¹¹⁸ At the eighth congress (Addis Ababa, November 1984), half a dozen papers on Islamic subjects were read. The topics included the account-book of an eighteenth-century emir of Harar, the Islamization of the Arsi Oromo, Arabic loanwords in Amharic, an Ethiopian Muslim dynasty in Yemen, a Muslim hagiography from Wallo, and some Harari texts.¹¹⁹ At the ninth conference, held in Moscow in 1986, the present writer's study of traditional Muslim education in Wallo and Sherr's paper on the role of Islam in Ethiopia and Somalia were presented.¹²⁰ The tenth conference

¹¹⁵ Anatoly A. Gromyko, 'Soviet-Ethiopian Relations, Ethiopian Studies in the USSR' (a paper read at the first All-Union Conference on Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, June 1979), 5.

¹¹⁶ E. van Donzel, 'Correspondence between Fasiladas and the Imams of Yemen', in Gideon Goldenberg (ed.), *Ethiopian Studies, Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference, Tel-Aviv, 14–17 April 1980* (Rotterdam/Boston, 1986), 91–100. See also 'Abd Allāh b. Ḥamid al-Hiyayd, 'Sifāra al-Imām al-Mutawakkil 'alā Allāh Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim al-balāṭ al-malakī fī 'āšima al-ḥabasha Jūdār', *Majalla al-Kullīyya al-Sharī'a wa'l-dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya*, 3 (AH 1397/8), 15–39.

¹¹⁷ Except perhaps the paper by Sven Rubenson, 'Shaykh Kasa Haylu', *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference*, 279–84. As the author says (282), the paper may 'modify the image of Tēwodros as the perpetual crusader against Islam'.

¹¹⁸ Abdussamad H. Ahmad, 'Muslims of Gondar 1900–1935' (a paper read at the Eleventh Annual Spring Symposium on 'Popular Islam in Twentieth-Century Africa' held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, April 2–3, 1984). See also his 'Darita, Bagemdir: An Historic Town and its Muslim Population, 1830–1890', *IJAHS* 22.3 (1989), 439–51.

¹¹⁹ Only two were published in the first volume of the proceedings: Hussein Ahmed, 'Introducing an Arabic Hagiography from Wallo', in Tadesse Beyene (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Frankfurt am Main/Huntingdon, 1988), i. 185–97; Ulrich Braukämper, 'The Islamicization of the Arssi-Oromo', *ibid.* 767–77.

¹²⁰ Hussein Ahmed, 'Traditional Muslim Education in Wallo', in *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, Moscow, 26–29 August 1986* (Moscow, 1988), iii. 94–106; E. S. Sherr, 'The Place and Role of Islam in Ethiopia and Somalia', *ibid.* iv. 211–20.

in Paris in 1988 saw only one paper read.¹²¹ As to other such meetings in the past, one notices, in addition to the small number of papers on Islamic subjects, a striking imbalance in their regional coverage: only Harar and the Dahlak islands seem to have received attention, while the central and northern highlands are neglected. Mention should also be made of Braukämper's paper read at the second international conference of Somali studies which was held in 1983.¹²²

As for occasional conferences, the Historical Society of Ethiopia, from its founding in 1970 to 1974, held annual meetings at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. The published proceedings of these, and of an earlier gathering preliminary to the founding of the society, include very few papers on Islam or based on Arabic sources. But the papers read at the Historical Society's conference on Harar, which remain unpublished, included a considerable number of contributions on Islamic topics, although they mostly dealt with urban Islam.¹²³ At the international symposium on ethnography and history in Ethiopian studies (Addis Ababa, 1982), two papers on Muslim studies were read: Hecht's comparative study of the material cultures of Harar and Lamu,¹²⁴ and the present writer's review of the literature on Islam.¹²⁵ This confirms that, even within the country itself, the subject has not figured prominently among research priorities. Except for Harar, Jimmā, and Hadyā,¹²⁶ the whole of Muslim Ethiopia has been neglected not only by historians but by anthropologists and political scientists as well.

VI. ARTICLES IN JOURNALS

In the specialist periodicals there has been scant attention paid to Islam in Ethiopia. The *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, published by the Institute

¹²¹ Hussein Ahmed, 'The Life and Career of Shaykh Ṭalḥa b. Ja'far (c. 1853–1935)'.

¹²² Ulrich Braukämper, 'Notes on the Islamicization and the Muslim Shrines of the Harar Plateau', in Thomas Labahn (ed.), *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Somali Studies, University of Hamburg, August 1–6, 1983* (Hamburg, 1984), ii, 145–74.

¹²³ The papers are: M. L. Bender, 'The Linguistic Context of Harar: Assorted Observations'; R. A. Caulk, 'Menilek's Conquest and Local Leaders in Harar'; E. D. Hecht, 'Harari Basketry'; V. Stitz, 'Arabic Town Records and the Economic and Population History of Harar during the Nineteenth Century'; S. R. Waldron, 'Within the Wall and Beyond: Harari Ethnic Identity and its Future'; and R. Wilding, 'Prehistory in Harar'.

¹²⁴ E.-D. Hecht, 'Harar and Lamu—A Comparison of Two East African Muslim Societies'.

¹²⁵ Hussein Ahmed, 'Ethiopian Islam: A Review of the Sources'.

¹²⁶ Sidney R. Waldron, 'Social Organization and Social Control in the Walled City of Harar, Ethiopia' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1974); *idem* and P. Koehn, Afocha: *A Link between Community and Administration in Harar, Ethiopia*

of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University since 1963, has printed only ten articles on Ethiopian Islam—fewer than have appeared in the proceedings of international conferences. Among their contributors are two Arabic scholars who specialize in the study of local Arabic. The one provides us with Hararī Arabic manuscripts,¹²⁷ while the other adds to the published Arabic sources on the Dahlak sultanate.¹²⁸ D. Crummey's paper on Shaykh Zakkāryās, a Muslim convert to Christianity early in this century, asks what social factors induced the Muslims of Bagēmder and Tegrāy to abandon their faith.¹²⁹ R. A. Caulk has contributed an article on religion and state in north-central Ethiopia in the nineteenth century.¹³⁰ Although no Muslim sources were used in the paper, the discussion throws light on the Wallo Muslim rebellions of the 1880s. Another article by Caulk deals with the conquest of Harar by Menilek II (r. 1889–1913) in 1887.¹³¹ Appearing more recently in *JES* is Hecht's article on Hararī housing.¹³²

Not many Ethiopians with modern training have been working on the study of Ethiopian Muslims. Among them is the Semiticist Abraham Demoz, who has discussed the image of Islam and Muslims as reflected in Christian writings,¹³³ although he has overlooked the long-established Muslim communities in the northern and central highlands. Merid's paper on the role and impact of firearms in Ethiopia,¹³⁴ based on Portuguese, Ge'ez, and Arabic sources, has challenged the long-held view that foreign intervention and assistance played a decisive part in the sixteenth-century conflicts between the Christians and the Muslims.

(New York, 1978); H. S. Lewis, *Jimma Abba Jifar: A Despotic Galla Kingdom* (New York, 1964); and Ulrich Braukämper, *Geschichte der Hadiya Süd-Äthiopiens* (Wiesbaden, 1980).

¹²⁷ Ewald Wagner, 'Three Arabic Documents on the History of Harar', *JES* 12.1 (1974), 213–24. See also the same author's: 'Eine Liste der Heiligen von Harar', *ZDMG* 123 (1973), 269–92; 'Genealogien aus Harar', *Der Islam*, 51 (1974), 97–117; *Legende und Geschichte der Fath Madīnat Harar von Yahyā Naṣrallāh* (Wiesbaden, 1978); 'Neuse Material zur "Ausa-Chronik"', *Fest. H.R. Roemer* (Beirut, 1979), 657–73, cited in *Index Islamicus* 1976–1980 (London, 1983), 274; and *Harari-Texte in arabische Schrift* (Wiesbaden, 1983).

¹²⁸ Madelaine Schneider, 'Notes au sujet de l'építaphe du premier sultan de Dahlak', *JES* 11.2 (1973), 167–8.

¹²⁹ D. Crummey, 'Shaikh Zakaryas: An Ethiopian Prophet', *JES* 10.1 (1972), 55–66.

¹³⁰ R. A. Caulk, 'Religion and the State in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia', *JES* 10.1 (1972), 23–41.

¹³¹ Id., 'The Occupation of Harar: January 1887', *JES* 9.2 (1971), 1–20.

¹³² E.-D. Hecht, 'The City of Harar and the Traditional Harar House', *JES* 15 (1982), 57–78.

¹³³ Abraham Demoz, 'Moslems and Islam in Ethiopic Literature', *JES* 10.1 (1972), 1–11.

¹³⁴ Merid W. Aregay, 'A Reappraisal of the Impact of Firearms in the History of Warfare in Ethiopia (c. 1500–1800)', *JES* 14 (1980), 98–121.

Seifu's paper, based on Amharic manuscripts, is a study of a Muslim community under Christian rule from the end of the last century.¹³⁵

Apart from the already mentioned works by Cerulli, the *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, published in Rome, includes a number of articles on the following topics: an Arabic funerary inscription from Arsi;¹³⁶ a similar inscription from the Dahlak islands;¹³⁷ the Shawān conquest of Awsā¹³⁸ with a short note on Shaykh Ṭalḥa b. Ja'far, a well-known Muslim teacher and militant leader in the 1880s;¹³⁹ and the Muslim stelae in Endartā, Tegrāy.¹⁴⁰

The *Annales d'Éthiopie*, published by the Institute of Archaeology in Addis Ababa since 1955, has printed three papers on Islamic topics, namely, Grāñ,¹⁴¹ the stelae in Qwiha,¹⁴² and those in Shawā.¹⁴³ The *Ethiopianist Notes*, later incorporated into *Northeast African Studies* and published by Michigan State University, has so far printed one article on Islam in Ethiopia, namely on the Muslim sultanates of south-eastern Ethiopia, which appeared in two issues.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁵ Seifu Metaferia, 'Sixteen Letters of Ras Mäkonnen and His Sons to Hajj Ahmad Aboññ of Harar', *JES* 12.2 (1974), 179–90.

¹³⁶ Ettore Rossi, 'Iscrizioni funerarie arabe musulmane del paese degli Arussi nel Museo Coloniale di Roma', *RSE* 2.2 (1942), 277–81. See also his 'Sulla storia delle isole Dahlak (Mar Rosso) nel medioevo', *Atti del III Congresso di studi coloniali*, vol. 4 (1937), 367–75.

¹³⁷ Id., 'L'iscrizione sepolcrale di Zain ul-Mulk figlia di un sultano di Dahlak (sec. XII) nel Museo di Treviso', *RSE* 3.1 (1943), 46–9. On the subject, see also R. Basset, 'Les Inscriptions de l'île de Dahlak', *Journal Asiatique*, 9e série, 1 (1893), 77–111; G. Wiet, 'Roitelets de Dahlak', *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, 34 (1951–2), 89–95; B. Malmusi, 'Lapida della necropoli musulmana di Dahlak', *Memorie dell'Accademia di Modena*, 11 (1895), 3–57 and 12 (1898), 53–102; and G. Oman, 'La necropoli islamica di Dahlak Kebir (Mar Rosso)', *Annali*, 33 (1974), 561–9 and 34 (1974), 209–15, and 'Osservazioni su una iscrizione proveniente dalle isole Dahlak', *Annali*, 17 (1968), 331–4.

¹³⁸ Carlo Giannini, 'La conquista scioana dell'Aussa (ricordi di missione)', *RSE* 3.2 (1943), 223–36.

¹³⁹ For a brief biographical note on the shaykh, see Carlo Conti Rossini, *Italia ed Etiopia del trattato d'Ucciali alla battaglia di Adua* (Roma, 1935), Appendix VIII, 468–9. See also my 'The Life and Career of Shaykh Ṭalḥa b. Ja'far (c. 1853–1936)', *JES* 22 (1989), 13–30.

¹⁴⁰ Costantino Pansera, 'Quattro stele musulmane presso Uogher Haribā nell'Enderta', *RSE Raccolti da C. Conti Rossini* (1945), 3–6.

¹⁴¹ A. Caquot, 'Histoire amharique de Grāñ et de Gallas', *Annales d'Éthiopie*, 2 (1957), 123–43.

¹⁴² Madelaine Schneider, 'Stèles funéraires arabes de Quiha', *AE* 7 (1967), 107–18.

¹⁴³ Id., 'Stèles funéraires musulmanes de la province du Choa', *AE* 8 (1970), 73–87 (see also the note by G. W. B. Huntingford, 'Arabic Inscriptions in Southern Ethiopia', *Antiquity*, 29 (1955), 230–3).

¹⁴⁴ Ulrich Braukämper, 'Islamic Principalities in South-east Ethiopia between the Thirteenth and Sixteenth Centuries' (Part One), *Ethiopianist Notes*, 1.1 (1977), 17–56 and (Part Two), 1.2 (1977), 1–43.

In spite of its relative inaccessibility and the lack of progress reports on the research projects listed in it, the *Register of Current Research on Ethiopia and the Horn*, which has been published by the IES since 1963, includes several tentative titles of studies on some aspects of Islam. Perhaps the most important of these is the study by V. V. Matveev of the Institute of Ethnology (USSR Academy of Sciences), on the Arabic sources relevant to Ethiopia and sub-Saharan Africa. The first part was published in 1964, and it had been announced that the remaining two sections were in press.¹⁴⁵ The two other projects listed in the *Register* are a history of Ethiopia as seen through Arabic sources from AD 526 to 1270 by S. Q. Fatimi, of the Islamic Research Institute of Pakistan,¹⁴⁶ and the conquest of Grāñ according to an 'abbreviated' chronicle, by V. M. Platonov of Leningrad University.¹⁴⁷ M. Schneider's study of the cult of saints in Ethiopian Islam¹⁴⁸ is also promising, especially when one remembers her valuable research on Arabic in Ethiopia.¹⁴⁹ The latest issue of the *Register* lists two research topics: the one on a Muslim traders' argot, by Hussein, and the other on mosque architecture, by R. Wilding.¹⁵⁰

Considering how few contributions on Islam in Ethiopia have been made to international conferences and scholarly journals specializing in Ethiopian studies, it is not surprising that there have been even fewer articles on that subject in general journals. Guérinot's already mentioned long article¹⁵¹ is perhaps the earliest attempt to treat Islam in the context of Ethiopian history and to recognize the existence of Muslim communities in the central regions.¹⁵² Based on Arabic sources, Ethiopic chronicles, and travellers' accounts, and divided into historical and ethnographic sections (the latter being devoted entirely to the various ethnic groups in Eritrea), the study offers a readable summary of the major events in the relations between Islam and the Christian kingdom. The author raises very important questions as to the mechanisms by which Islam spread into the interior and the factors which facilitated its expansion.¹⁵³ He rightly concludes that the long, often violent, conflicts between the Christian state and Islam, which involved movements of people and exchange of prisoners, contributed paradoxically to the peaceful penetration of Islam. However, he makes the unacceptable statement that the Šūfī orders were unknown and that theolo-

¹⁴⁵ *Register of Current Research in Ethiopia and the Horn* [hereafter *Register*], ed. S. Chojnacki and Richard Pankhurst (July 1964), 19.

¹⁴⁶ *Register* (July 1966), 16.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 19.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 36.

¹⁴⁹ *Register*, ed. S. Chojnacki, Richard Pankhurst, and William A. Shack (July 1963), 20.

¹⁵⁰ *Register*, ed. Tadesse Beyene and Tadesse Tamrat (December 1980), 44–5.

¹⁵¹ See above, n. 30.

¹⁵² Guérinot, 'L'Islam', 10, 21.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* 21, 29.

gical schools were rare. His bold assertion that Islam in Ethiopia was 'degenerate' betrays the author's ignorance of its local vitality.¹⁵⁴

In an article published in the *Journal of African History*, Caulk has added to the relatively rich literature on the belated spread of Islam from Harar to the Oromo countryside in the second half of the nineteenth century, on the basis of some local sources.¹⁵⁵ He also mentions a tradition about the introduction and spread of Islam from southern Wallo among some Oromo groups near Harar.¹⁵⁶ In another paper he discusses the relations between Ethiopia and the Sudanese Mahdist state, and the colonial penetration in north-east Africa, on the basis of Christian sources.¹⁵⁷ A study on Wallaggā by Triulzi is concerned with the role of Islam in trade and politics amongst the Oromo of that region in the late nineteenth century, using Mahdist, Ethiopian, and European material.¹⁵⁸ It may be added that, in a recent book, he has given a brief account of the spread of Islam in a specific part of Wallaggā.¹⁵⁹

The *Journal [of the] Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* has carried some rather thinly documented articles on Muslim education in Ethiopia and the Horn. The first, on Muslim education in north-east Africa, actually focuses on education in Somalia.¹⁶⁰ The second attempts to assess Muslim education in Ethiopia.¹⁶¹ However, some of the writer's conclusions, such as his implied suggestion that the quality of education offered in the urban centres is better than that given in rural areas, and his statement that Islam served as a 'unifying ideology' for the Oromo and enabled them to abandon their pastoral way of life,¹⁶² are in need of substantiation. The most recent is a study of an Islamic religious and philanthropic organization in Asmarā, Ethiopia's second largest city.¹⁶³

It must be repeated that whatever little attention scholars have paid to the study of Muslim culture has concentrated on comparatively narrow aspects of the literature, military history, administration, and

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 30.

¹⁵⁵ R. A. Caulk, 'Harār Town and its Neighbours in the Nineteenth Century', *JAH* 18.3 (1977), 369–86.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 381, 384.

¹⁵⁷ Id., 'Yohannes IV, the Mahdists, and the Colonial Partition of North-east Africa', *Transafrican Journal of History*, 1.2 (1971), 23–42.

¹⁵⁸ A. Triulzi, 'Trade, Islam and the Mahdia in Northeastern Wallaggā', *JAH* 16.1 (1975), 55–71.

¹⁵⁹ Id., *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy* (Napoli, 1981), 139–43.

¹⁶⁰ Abdisalam Yassin Mohamed, 'Early Muslim Education and its Role in Northeast Africa', *Journal, Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* [hereafter *JIMMA*], 1.2/2.1 (1979/80), 125–31.

¹⁶¹ Kebreab W. Giorgis, 'Muslim Education in Ethiopia', *JIMMA* 3.2 (1981), 75–85.

¹⁶² Ibid. 79, 80, 85.

¹⁶³ Yassin M. Abera, 'Muslim Institutions in Ethiopia: The Asmara Awqaf', *JIMMA* 5.1 (1983/4), 203–23.

material culture of Muslim communities, largely in Harar and the coastal areas, leaving out other aspects and regions. Equally important and crucial aspects of indigenous Islam, and of Muslim communities in the northern, central, and southern parts of the country, have barely been treated.

VII. SECONDARY WORKS IN ARABIC AND UNPUBLISHED THESES

Works published in Arabic since the turn of the present century include a long account by a Turkish officer about his travels in Ethiopia in 1896,¹⁶⁴ and a short book by the Egyptian writer Yūsuf Aḥmad about Islam and Ethiopia, which is mainly based on a limited number of medieval Arabic sources and a few European works.¹⁶⁵ This was followed in 1945 by a long work on the subject by another Egyptian,¹⁶⁶ and an article by Ibrāhīm Ṭarkhān in 1948.¹⁶⁷

In the early 1960s an Ethiopian Muslim, using the pen-name Abū Aḥmad al-Ithyūbī, wrote a short book based on secondary Arabic sources and covering events up to the time of its publication.¹⁶⁸ In addition to several factual errors, the author makes the startling claim that 75 per cent of the Ethiopian population is Muslim.¹⁶⁹ For the most recent events he drew on anonymous eyewitness accounts and newspaper reports. Regrettably, the book's shortcomings are characteristic of most of the recent works on Ethiopia published in Arabic. However, Abū Aḥmad's book is important because it contains an account of some measures taken by the Haile Sellassie government against Muslim areas soon after the end of the Italian occupation in 1941. Such areas as Qāllu, Awsā, and Yajju in Wallo, and Ifāt and some Gurāgē localities in Shawā, were affected by punitive campaigns. Though the reliability of the details remains to be established, the author considers these events as part of a planned action against those Ethiopians suspected of having collaborated with the Italians after 1936. Abū Aḥmad also gives a short list of prominent nineteenth-century Muslim scholar-saints of central Ethiopia.¹⁷⁰

The works of Abū Aḥmad and the Egyptians writing in the 1930s

¹⁶⁴ Ṣādiq Bāshā, *Rihlatu'l-Ḥabasha* (1908).

¹⁶⁵ Yūsuf Aḥmad, *al-Islām wa'l-Ḥabasha*, 1st edn. (Cairo, 1354/1935).

¹⁶⁶ 'Abd al-Majīd 'Ābidīn, *Bayna'l-Ḥabasha wa'l-'Arab* (Cairo, [1945]).

¹⁶⁷ Ibrāhīm Ṭarkhān, 'al-Islām wa'l-mamālik al-islāmiyya bi'l-Ḥabasha', *Majallatu 'l-Jam'iyya al-Miṣriyya li'l-Dirāsāt al-Tārikhiyya* (Cairo, 1948).

¹⁶⁸ Abū Aḥmad al-Ithyūbī (pseud.), *al-Islām al-Jarīḥ fī'l-Ḥabasha* [1960].

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 132–3.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 128.

and 1940s lack proper documentation and their approach is paternalistic. They tend to concentrate upon the real or imagined plight of Ethiopian Muslims. Among non-Ethiopian African Muslims with modern scholarly training, a few have turned their skills to the study of Islam in Ethiopia. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, an Egyptian, has a chapter on the subject in his study of West Africa.¹⁷¹ Another Egyptian trained in African studies wrote a history of Islam in Ethiopia in the Middle Ages with particular reference to Christian-Muslim relations.¹⁷² His bibliography includes works by medieval Arab authors and a number of Italian and English sources.

The early 1970s saw the publication of a monograph by a Sudanese writer, Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Qaddāl, on the relations between the Mahdists and Ethiopia,¹⁷³ and a joint edition, with Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Abū Salīm, of one of the works of the official chronicler of the Mahdiyya, Ismā'īl ibn 'Abd al-Qādir.¹⁷⁴ In 1975 a fairly long book by Mumtāz al-'Arīf was published.¹⁷⁵

A number of unpublished undergraduate theses submitted to the Department of History, Addis Ababa University, indirectly bear on some aspects of Islam. Seyoum's study of Islam in central Ethiopia has curiously little on the subject, and reflects the traditional view that the nineteenth-century political struggles in north-central Ethiopia can be explained in ethnic (Amhara-versus-Oromo) and religious (Christianity-versus-Islam) terms.¹⁷⁶ Gabira Madihin's essay is on Yohannes IV's religious policy regarding the Wallo Muslims from the point of view of the emperor's attempt at centralization.¹⁷⁷ Fekadu's and Zergaw's theses deal with Wallo from 1700 to 1908 together with good oral material on the resistance to Yohannes's policy of religious coercion, and with the historical and geopolitical configuration of the region.¹⁷⁸ Moham-

¹⁷¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zakī, *Ta'rikh al-Duwal al-Islāmiyya al-Sūdāniyya bi'l-Ifriqiyya al-Gharbiyya* (Cairo, 1961), 40–7.

¹⁷² Zāhir Riyād, *al-Islām fī ltyūbyā* (Cairo, 1964). See also Ramzī Tādrus, *Kitāb Ḥādir al-Habasha wa Mustaqbaluhā* (Cairo, n.d.).

¹⁷³ Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Qaddāl, *al-Mahdiyya wa'l-Habasha* (Khartoum, 1972).

¹⁷⁴ Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Abū Salīm and Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Qaddāl (eds.), *al-Ṭirāz al-manqūsh bibushrā qatl Yuhannā malik al-Hubūsh* (Khartoum, 1972).

¹⁷⁵ Mumtāz al-'Arīf, *al-Aḥbāsh bayna Ma'rib wa Aksūm* (Beirut, 1975). The bibliography has two Arabic works on Ethiopia: Faṭḥī Ghayth, *al-Islām wa'l-Habasha 'abr al-Tārikh* (Cairo, 1967) and Rāshid Barāwī, *al-Habasha*.

¹⁷⁶ Seyoum Wolde Yohannes, 'Ras Ali and Tewodros: The Position of Islam in Central Ethiopia' (1968).

¹⁷⁷ Gabira Madihin Kidane, 'Yohannes IV; Religious Aspects of his Internal Policy' (1972). On this theme, see also Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography* (Oxford, 1975), 94–100.

¹⁷⁸ Fekadu Begna, 'A Tentative History of Wallo, 1855–1908' (1972) and Zergaw Asfera, 'Some Aspects of Historical Development in Amhara/Wallo (ca. 1700–1815)' (1973).

med's paper is an annotated translation of the letters exchanged between the Mahdists and the contemporary Ethiopian rulers,¹⁷⁹ while Atieb and Eshetu wrote on, respectively, the Bēla Shangul and Shaykh Ḥusayn.¹⁸⁰ Ahmed's thesis on Harar follows a trend worth pursuing as it is concerned with the material culture of that city.¹⁸¹ Solomon's paper on Islam and the conflict in the Horn has very little that is new.¹⁸²

As far as work for higher degrees is concerned, a graduate thesis on Wallo was completed recently at Addis Ababa University.¹⁸³ Outside Ethiopia, a doctoral thesis on the 'Afār based on Arabic manuscripts and oral data was submitted to the University of Cambridge,¹⁸⁴ and another on Islam amongst the same people was completed at the University of Washington in Seattle.¹⁸⁵ Yet another, on the Oromo of south-west Ethiopia, was successfully defended at the University of London.¹⁸⁶

PROSPECTS AND CONCLUSION

It is to be assumed that a great deal of untapped source material on Islam in Ethiopia is extant. First, there is a collection of about forty

¹⁷⁹ Mohammed Hamid Idris, 'Correspondence between Ethiopian Leaders & Mahdist Princes 1888–1893' (1973).

¹⁸⁰ Atieb Ahmed Dafallah, 'Sheikh Khojele al-Hassan and Bela-Shangul (1825–1938)' (1973) and Eshetu Setegn, 'Shaikh Husayn of Bale and his Followers' (1973).

¹⁸¹ Ahmed Zakaria, 'Mosques of Harar' (1979). See also Kedir Mohammed, 'The History of the Two Oldest Mosques in Addis Ababa' (1986).

¹⁸² Solomon Ali Mohammed, 'Islam and the Conflict in the Horn of Africa (1941–1979)' (Political Science and International Relations, 1982). See also H. Erlich, 'The Horn of Africa and the Middle East: Politicization of Islam in the Horn and Depoliticization of Ethiopian Christianity', in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference, A*, 399–408.

¹⁸³ Asnake Ali, 'Aspects of the Political History of Wallo: 1872–1916' (M.A. thesis, School of Graduate Studies, AAU, 1983).

¹⁸⁴ Maknun Gamaledin, 'The Dynamic Periphery: The Political Economy of the Afar Region of Ethiopia, 1943–1975', cited in R. A. Caulk, 'Work Being Done outside of Ethiopia on Ethiopian History and Related Topics: A Survey', in *Proceedings of the Second Annual Seminar of the Department of History (AAU)*, vol. 2 (Addis Ababa, 1984), 33. (The *Proceedings* includes a short typescript version of the present paper: 40–60.) Maknun informed me (Cambridge, 11 September 1984) that his father, Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Khalīl, authored an Arabic history of Awsā entitled *al-Muttakīl 'alā Akhbār al-Danākīl*, the manuscripts of which, in three vols., are in Maknun's brother's possession.

¹⁸⁵ Kassim Shehim, 'The Influence of Islam on the 'Afar' (1982), *African Studies Association News*, 16.1 (January/March 1983), 35. The study is both historical and sociological, and is based on oral sources and travel accounts: *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 43.6 (December 1982), 1057-A.

¹⁸⁶ Mohammed Hassen, 'The Oromo of Ethiopia, 1500–1850; with special emphasis on the Gibe region' (Ph.D. thesis, SOAS, University of London, 1983). The thesis has

manuscripts in Arabic (and in the Hararī language in Arabic script) deposited at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies.¹⁸⁷ They are important, not because all of them will necessarily be useful for historians, but because they represent works composed by Ethiopian Muslims. The most interesting are one section of manuscript 276, written in 1956, about Harar, listing events arranged in chronological sequence with commentary, and manuscript 794 on the 'conquest of Harar' and the coming of 'Umar al-Riḍā (a thirteenth-century saint), which also contains an anonymous piece on the introduction of Islam and on the reigns of the emirs of Harar.

Secondly, in the various Muslim centres of learning and of local pilgrimage, in northern and central Ethiopia, there are many manuscripts in the possession of the 'ulamā'. They deal mostly with theology, but some are definitely of historical and literary value. The systematic collection, or photographic reproduction, and analysis of such indigenous sources is imperative.

Important among these sources is the type known as the *manāqib* (lit.: virtues), the Muslim equivalent of the Christian hagiographies. Their potential significance can be best understood if we bear in mind the extent to which Christian hagiographical traditions have been used by scholars as a unique source for the medieval history of the Christian kingdom. The *manāqib* are written either in Arabic or in the Amharic, Hararī, and 'Afār languages in Arabic script, either in prose or in verse.¹⁸⁸ Their importance for biographical and theological studies is immense.

Another category of local sources is the pietistic literature which includes works on dogma¹⁸⁹ and commentaries on classical religious texts. One such work has been published under the title, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570–1860* (Cambridge, 1990).

¹⁸⁷ For a preliminary assessment of the collection, see Jacques Jomier, 'Note sur quelques manuscrits arabes se trouvant en Ethiopie', *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire*, 9 (1967), 287–93.

¹⁸⁸ Three anonymous works have already been published on Shaykh Nūr Ḥusayn: *Kitāb rabī' al-qulūb fī dhikr manāqib wa faḍā'il sayyidinā al-shaykh Nūr Ḥusayn* (Cairo, 1927); *Kitāb al-Nuzhatu'l-Asrār wa'l-ṭahārāt al-aqdhār* (Cairo, 1927); and *Rabī' al-qulūb fī dhikr manāqib wa faḍā'il sayyidinā al-Shaykh Nūr Ḥusayn* (Cairo, 1948–9).

¹⁸⁹ Five have already appeared in print: Al-Hāj Sayid Bushrā, *Minḥatu'l-Ilāhiyya wa'l-Faydatu'l-Rabbāniyya* (Cairo, n.d.); Shaykh Jawhar b. Haydar b. 'Alī, *al-Jawāhir al-Haydariyya* (Cairo, 1324/1906); id., *al-Biḍ'atu'l-Sanniyya 'alā'l-Lu'mati'l-Bahiyya* (Cairo, 1348/1929); Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān al-Tijānī, alias Abbā Meḥḥā Abbā Wāji Abbā Gomol, *al-Minhal al-asfā fī ziyārati'l-Nabiyyi'l-Muṣṭafā* (Cairo, 1373/1953), and Shaykh Muḥammad Amīn, *Kitāb Dawā' al-Qulūb* (Addis Ababa, n.d.). The third author, who is a nephew of Abbā Jifār II, has an unpublished work entitled *Kitāb Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr fī'l-Iḥtiṣāl lidhikrī 'Īd Milād al-Nūr bī'l-Farḥi wa'l-Surūr*. (Tekalign W. Maryam, my colleague in the Department of History, AAU, and at present a doctoral student at Boston University, kindly allowed me to consult the manuscript.)

texts, as well as prayer manuals. Shorter notices, being mainly lists of dates of important local events such as the deaths of scholars and chiefs and the occurrence of natural disasters, also exist and can be used to reconstruct the history of local communities.

Oral traditions about the origin of the Muslim communities, as well as ritual recitations (*dhikr*)¹⁹⁰ and panegyrics (*manzūma*) recited during religious and communal festivals and other social events,¹⁹¹ can be profitably used. A study of the ritual ceremonies held during visits to local Muslim shrines can yield clues about the nature and extent of popular Islam.¹⁹² The material culture of the Muslims of Ethiopia is very rich. A study of the architecture of village and town mosques, shrines, and tombs will help to clarify how much external influence, if any, is reflected in the style of the buildings. A survey of old Muslim settlements and a search for surviving coinage in areas other than Harar still wait to be undertaken. An investigation into the oral and written literature of Ethiopian Muslims is a potentially rich field of research.¹⁹³ Islamization in Ethiopia has not been accompanied by any degree of Arabization comparable to that of the Sudan. However, it has been followed by Arabic influence upon some of the Ethiopian languages spoken by Muslims,¹⁹⁴ and a study of this phenomenon, and of local dialects, should prove to be interesting and rewarding.

Areas with numerically significant Muslim populations which deserve to be studied include Shawā, Wallo, Tegrāy, Bagēmder, Gojjām, and the southern regions. Eritrea, Harar, and, to some extent, the south-eastern parts have already been the subjects of partial or near-complete

¹⁹⁰ For instance, see Ewald Wagner, 'Arabische Heiligenlieder aus Harar', *ZDMG* 125 (1975), 28–65.

¹⁹¹ Assefa Mammo, 'Some Prominent Features of the Menzuma Genre in the Wollo Region' (M.A. thesis in Literature, School of Graduate Studies, AAU, 1987).

¹⁹² For a preliminary study of this phenomenon, see my 'Two Muslim Shrines in South Wallo' in *Proceedings of the Fifth Seminar of the Department of History* (Addis Ababa, 1990), 61–74, and Seggē Negātu, 'Oral Traditions on the Miracles of Shaykh Sayyid Bushrā and the Celebration of the *Mawlid* Festival at Garā (Wallo)' [in Amharic] (B.A. thesis, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, AAU, 1990).

¹⁹³ For a recent study, see Thomas L. Kane, 'Muslim Writers in Amharic', *IV Congresso Internazionale*, 717–26. See also E. Cerulli, 'Canti Amarici dei Musulmani di Abissinia', in his *L'Islam di ieri*, 245–56.

¹⁹⁴ In addition to W. Leslau's pioneer studies on Arabic loanwords in Ethio-Semitic languages—'Arabic Loanwords in Amharic', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 19.2 (1957), 221–44; 'Arabic Loanwords in Argobba', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 77 (1957), 36–9—and others, one can also consult A. J. Drewes, *Classical Arabic in Central Ethiopia* (Oosters Genootschap in Nederland 7) (Leiden, 1976), 169–98 and C. A. Ferguson, 'The Role of Arabic in Ethiopia: A Sociological Perspective', in J. F. Pride and Janet Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (Harmondsworth, 1972), 112–24.

studies. The research orientation should therefore be away from the periphery to the centre, a region where a process of ethnic and cultural intermingling has been going on for a considerable period of time. The overconcentration of the existing historiography upon the centre of the country at the expense of the outlying areas, a subject recently discussed by Triulzi,¹⁹⁵ does not apply to Muslim studies. The literature on Islam in Ethiopia, as the present paper has attempted to illustrate, deals almost wholly with areas outside the north-central highlands.

Another major area of research is the study of the sources, mechanisms, and factors behind the penetration and diffusion of Islam into the interior of Ethiopia, and of the nature and intensity of its impact on the pre-existing communities. In addition, the educational system, administration of Islamic law and justice,¹⁹⁶ character of trading patterns, and other Muslim professional skills, as well as the relations among the various Ethiopian Muslim communities and between them and the Muslim world at large, all deserve investigation. The role of Muslim traders, scholars, chiefs, and leaders of the several *Šūfī* orders in the dissemination of Islam and Muslim culture is also a relevant field of research.

An examination into the manifestations of popular Islam and how far it conforms to the principles of orthodoxy will help in establishing to what extent a union between Islamic teachings and other beliefs has taken place, and in throwing light on how and why early Islam was able, or unable, to adapt itself to the various social and cultural milieux in which it found itself. The study of the development of indigenous Islamic institutions, and of the relations between Islam and regional and central power structures, is essential for an understanding of the internal dynamics of Islam in the Ethiopian region.

Unlike in West, North, and, to some extent, East Africa, where the study of Islam has long been recognized as a legitimate field of research and teaching, that of Islam in Ethiopia has not been accorded its due place within the broad framework of Ethiopian studies. The history of Islam in Ethiopia has at best been viewed only in relation to the history of the Christian kingdom and, at worst, as an unpleasant episode in an otherwise glorious national history. Because no distinction was made between the political, often expansionist, manifestations of external

¹⁹⁵ A. Triulzi, 'Center-Periphery Relations in Ethiopian Studies: Reflections on Ten Years of Research on Wellega History', *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference*, 359–63.

¹⁹⁶ A number of undergraduate essays submitted to the Faculty of Law, AAU, have dealt with the role of the *Shari'a* in the legal system. See Norman J. Singer, 'Islamic Law and the Development of the Ethiopian Legal System', *Howard Law Journal*, 17.1 (1971), 130–68.

Islam on the one hand, and indigenous Islam which is part of the Ethiopian culture on the other, Islam in Ethiopia has had the misfortune of being artificially identified with the interests of external Muslim powers. The result has been to see in Islam a permanent threat to the survival of Ethiopia as a nation-state. Perpetual conflict and antagonism between Christian and Muslim rulers have been overemphasized at the expense of peaceful interactions between the respective communities. It goes without saying that a proper tackling of these and other relevant questions about the historical role of Islam in Ethiopia will contribute towards undermining the long-held misconceptions and biases which are woven into the very fabric of the existing literature. It will also provide a solid basis and a fresh perspective for the further enrichment and development of Ethiopian studies in particular and African studies in general.